(f) the time by which these posts are likely to be filled up; and

(g) the reasons for the delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (g) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

VSNL Deregulation

3532. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Swedish firm may gain from VSNL deregulation" appearing in "The Observer of Business and Politics", New Delhi dated July 18, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news-item is a despatch from Stockholm by one Mr. Alfrod de Tavares. The author has quoted extensively the views expressed by officers of Swedish Ministry of Trade, Ericsson (Swedish Telecom Giant), some Economic analysts and the Swedish Economic daily. The news item is based on the author's perception of VSNL status as one of the Navratnas and his anticipation of the course of future development/ expansion of VSNL in the area of international telephone traffic.

(c) Since the views expressed in the Press Report reflect only the author's perception of boost to business interests of Swedish firms in India, including that of Ericsson following grant of Navratna status to VSNL; it does not call for any specific Govt. reaction.

Utilization of Resources for Rural Development

3533. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a shortfall in the utilisation of resources for providing self-employment opportunities to the educated unemployed weaker sections of the society;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Planning Commission has suggested for setting up of a high level Committee to evaluate the adequacy of the administrative arrangements for rural development; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to ensure full utilisation of resources in that regard?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : (a) and (b) Statistics regarding the utilisation of funds for educated unemployed weaker sections of the society is not monitored separately by the Ministry.

(c) and (d) A committee was set up by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Prof. S.R. Hashim, Member, Planning Commission, to review and rationalise the various Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Poverty Alleviation and Employment generation. The committee has submitted its report.

HPT and LPT in West Bengal

3534. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of HPT and LPT presently functioning in West Bengal, location-wise;

(b) the present area of their operation and coverage and the future plan of action for strengthening and modernising these transmitters;

(c) the number of Doordarshan Kendras functioning in the State;

(d) whether there is any plan to modernise these Kendras;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) 6 HPTs, 20 LPTs and 2 VLPTs are presently functioning in the State of West Bengal as per location-wise details given in the Statement enclosed.

(b) While TV service is presently available to an estimated 96.0% population and 95.4% area of the State, cent percent coverage, both area-wise and population-wise is expected to be achieved on commissioning of 5 HPT and 3 LPT/VLPT projects presently under implementation/envisaged to be set up in the State of West Bengal.

(c) to (f) While TV Studios for DD-I and DD-II at Doordarshan Kendra, Calcutta and an interim Studio set up at Shantiniketan are presently functioning in West Bengal, Studio Centre at Jalpaiguri is technically ready and would be commissioned on sanction of staff by the competent authority. Studio (permanent set-up) at Shantiniketan is also presently under implementation. Augmentation/modernisation of Doordarshan Kendras by way of replacement of old equipment and introduction of new technology is a continuous activity taken up from time to time according to requirements of the particular Kendras.